

Libary

BOROUGH OF OKEHAMPTON



Annual Report

OF THE



MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE

Year Ended 31st December, 1958

P u b l i c H e a l t h S t a f f



Medical Officer of Health:

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE, M.D., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Borough Engineer and Public Health Inspector:

R. A. BRUNSKILL, M.Inst.R.A., M.R.S.H.

Assistant Public Health Inspector:

E. FURSE.

Clerical Assistant:

Miss J. M. SHORT.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit this my twenty-fourth Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1958, in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

The general health of the Borough remains good, and there was no epidemic of any kind during the year.

The crude birth rate, whilst still remaining below the figure for England and Wales as a whole, is two points higher than that of last year. The crude death rate has risen by six points to 16·4 and is well above the national average.

The vital statistics are set out in the tables below:—

SECTION “A”

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (statute acres)	786
Population—1931 Census	3,519
Population—1951 Census	3,897
Estimated home Population—mid 1958 ...	3,890
Number of inhabited houses	1,240
Rateable Value	£47,560 0 0
Product of the Penny Rate	£188 0 0
Loan Debt	£140,319 0 0

VITAL STATISTICS

	Male	Female	Total
Births	23	18	41
Legitimate	23	17	
Illegitimate	—	1	
Deaths	31	33	64
			England & Wales
Live Births			41
Live Birth rate per 1,000 population			10·5 16·4
Corrected Birth Rate			11·3
Still Births			3
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 live and still births			68·1 21·6
Total Live and Still Births			44
Infant Deaths			nil
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births. Total			— 22·5
Infant Mortality Rate. Legitimate			—
Infant Mortality Rate. Illegitimate			—
Neo-Natal Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births			—
Illegitimate live births per cent of total births			2·4%
Maternal deaths (including abortion)			nil
Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 live and still births			—
Death Rate per 1,000 population			16·4 11·4
Corrected Death Rate			12·9

Year	Population	Birth Rate	Death Rate
1954	3,860	11.4	12.2
1955	3,840	14.8	12.2
1956	3,900	12.8	15.3
1957	3,910	8.7	10.4
1958	3,890	10.5	16.4

The Chief causes of death were as follows:

Cancer	10
Vascular diseases	11
Coronary diseases	7
Heart diseases	18
Other circulatory diseases	3
Pneumonia	1
Bronchitis	1
Other respiratory diseases	2
Ulcer of the stomach	1
Nephritis	1
Hyperplasia of the Prostate	1
Other ill-defined causes	5
Accidental	2
Suicide	1
TOTAL:	64

AGES OF DEATH TABLE

Age at Death	Male	Female
Under 1 year	—	—
1 - 5 years	—	—
5 - 15 years	—	—
15 - 25 years	—	—
25 - 35 years	—	—
35 - 45 years	—	—
45 - 55 years	1	2
55 - 65 years	5	3
65 - 75 years	7	6
75 years and over	18	22
TOTAL:	31	33

SECTION "B"

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

There was no change in the general provision of the health service during the year.

National Assistance Act, 1948:

No use was made during the year of the provisions of Section 47 of this Act.

Ambulances:

A highly satisfactory service is provided by the St. John Ambulance Brigade, under delegated powers from the Local County Health Authority. This service provides a 24-hour cover for the whole of the district and is most efficient. Powers of far reaching authority for the administration of the service is vested in the Local County Health Authority, and for the discipline of the Brigade with the St. John Headquarters. The day to day administration and actual running of the service is entirely local. This is undoubtedly, in my opinion, the major contributory factor in its efficiency.

At the time of writing the new Ambulance Station and Headquarters in Mill Street is nearing completion, and it is hoped that it will be opened and in full use by mid-summer 1959.

Care, Disposal and General Management of those who are old, infirm, or for various reasons require care and attention.

In my opinion, humanitarian efforts as regards this group are unsuccessful in this widely scattered country district. Our most important assistant--the multi-duty Relieving Officer--has been dispensed with, and his place has been taken by a number of specialists, such as authorised officers working under the County Mental Health Department (who may be anything up to 40 miles distant), the Welfare Officer, working under a branch of the County Clerk's Department (who likewise has an enormous territory to cover), the National Assistance Officer—who is a Civil Servant, --and covers what to my mind is an area of such size that a proper and humane knowledge of all those in need of financial assistance cannot be properly come by. We also have the Registrar of births and deaths, who although more localised, is in some cases not easily accessible.

There is no doubt, in my mind, that an irrefutable case can be made out for the re-establishment of the multi-duty officer in these rural areas. One can quite readily imagine that the implementation of the administration of these various Acts and Orders is justified when applied to a city, where administration is carried out from a central point accessible to the whole town, but this set-up is quite impossible to reproduce in this sparsely populated area, where for a specialist to have sufficient work to occupy his time, an enormous area has to be included under his administration.

We have a further difficulty at the moment. With the dissolution of the unions, and the absorption of most of the bodies into the Regional Hospital Scheme, an acute problem arises which has not been resolved. This is being accentuated year by year by the progress in medical science, whereby such deaths as acute bronchial pneumonia, known as "the old

man's friend," no longer is a hazard. Consequently we are, year by year, being faced with an ever growing number of old folk to be cared for in one way or another.

An analysis of my death returns gives the following figures:

Average percentage of deaths in persons over 65 years of age in the years preceeding the introduction of antibiotics 67% of total deaths.

Average percentage of deaths in persons over 65 years of age in the years succeeding the introduction of antibiotics 79% of total deaths.

These figures show an increase of something like 12%, on an annual basis, of old people who have to be cared for, and the accommodation is not available. The palatial "old folks' homes" which are being erected by the County Welfare Authorities are by no means the answer to this problem, and at the present rate of increase will never catch up with the accumulating requirements. On the other hand one could not, under any circumstances, recommend the return of the old workhouse system. What would appear to be imperative is that an intermediary institution be considered, something between the present day palatial monument to the Welfare Department and the monstrosity created by their predecessors.

Tuberculosis:

The Mass Radiography Unit visited Okehampton in February. A total of 922 persons were examined. One active and one non-active case of Tuberculosis were discovered and six people were referred for further observation. None of the 188 scholars in this total were found to be suffering from the disease.

SECTION "C"

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply:

Water supply remains as in previous years. It is of unlimited quantity and excellent quality.

Rainfall:

Records are taken at two points and are forwarded to the Air Ministry monthly. Figures for the past six years are set out below:

	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953
Cranmere	—	96·70	76·00	64·74	99·52	65·65
Newbridge	—	73·40	57·00	55·61	83·30	54·08
Filter Station	58·33	55·65	45·82	49·05	61·83	41·48
Pleasure Gardens ...	55·48	49·11	43·07			
Dry Days (no rain)	232	207	189	189	131	187

The driest months were March, April and June.

Filtration and Treatment:

The pressure filtration and lime treatment plant has been in continuous operation throughout the year. Minor intermittent faults were remedied by the attendant in daily attendance. The sludge beds were cleared and overhauled.

A by-pass sluice valve with a hydrant at the Filter Station so controls the supply than an emergency supply from the Intakes can now be diverted direct to the reservoir without passing through the filter station. This will be valuable in case of emergency repairs.

Service Reservoir

The Kent Venturi Meter connections and float chambers were overhauled, cleaned and repaired by the makers.

Distribution:

At Limehayes Road a further new length of 4" asbestos pressure pipe main was laid between Exeter Road and Leaholes Avenue. This has provided substantially improved supply in upper Exeter Road and Leaholes Avenue areas.

In connection with the A.30 West Bridge Road Improvement Scheme, the temporary 4" high level and low level zone mains were removed for a temporary bridge over the West Oakment River and replaced by a new permanent 4" cast iron main in ducts under the footways on the new bridge.

New services and supply pipes are now mainly laid in copper and polythene tubes. Service stopcocks fixed direct on the mains obviate cutting off main supplies during repairs. New services have been provided for two new properties and nine existing properties.

In accordance with the Council's policy for large consumers further water meters have been fixed at trade premises, garages, schools and similar buildings. The new meters appear to work satisfactorily and without trouble.

Drainage and Sewerage:

Sewers and sewage disposal works have again continued to operate satisfactorily with no serious defects. Gas Works has continued.

Repairs included relaying a short length of sewer and building a rodding chamber adjoining West River at New Road. New manhole covers were fixed in Exeter Road and Market Street. Minor repairs were again carried out to the 12" distribution pipes and screening tanks at the disposal works.

Additional labour was again provided for the farmer for clearing and spreading sludge. The irrigation channels were partially cleared of deposit and weeds. Effluent standards have been well maintained and no complaints as to river pollution have been received.

Rivers and Streams:

The East and West Ockment rivers are self-cleansing and very clean. Solid rubbish is periodically removed.

Swimming Pool:

The swimming pool and paddling pool, both of which are supplied by continuous running water, have been well maintained and conducted

Public Cleansing, Refuse Collection and Disposal:

Refuse collection and disposal have continued with weekly collections. Street cleansing is carried out over some areas at the same time as refuse collection. Normal street cleansing is daily by orderly truck, including Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings.

Disposal by regulated tipping has been satisfactory. Rodent Control is carried out by the Council's own operator. The tip is regularly treated and sprayed daily or as necessary with tip dressing for the control of flies. Considerable quantities of trade refuse are also dumped on the tip. The deposit of refuse from egg grading and packing stations has again caused something of a problem.

Salvage:

Small quantities of scrap metals have been disposed of but there is still no worth while demand for waste paper much of which has to be burnt on the tip.

Infectious Diseases and Disinfection:

No cases of infectious diseases had to be dealt with for the tenth year in succession. Minor disinfestation treatment has been in individual houses for flies.

Rodent Control:

In accordance with Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food requirements rodent control continued as required throughout the year with a part-time operator. Block control has again been carried out where necessary to a progressively lessening extent, and incidence. Sewer treatment again showed comparatively little infestation and only in small limited areas.

Factories and Workshops:

Factories and Workshops have been kept in good condition. Inspections have been made in 104 instances and informal notice was given in 3 cases for want of cleanliness and defective sanitary accommodation. The tables on pages 8 and 9 give details of inspections and defects found.

Smoke Abatement:

Three minor cases of smoke emission, all from laundries, were dealt with by informal action. Both laundries have carried out further alterations to their boiler furnaces to improve conditions.

Fish Frying:

One small fish frying shop and one larger fish frying shop and café have been well conducted.

Offensive Trades:

At the two establishments seven inspections were made. No action has been necessary.

Sanitary Inspection of the Area:

The following visits and inspections were carried out during the year:

Houses—repairs	87
Houses—re-housing	24
Drainage	18
Public Conveniences	57
Sewerage	33
Water Supply, including Housing	108
Rivers	24
Refuse Disposal	14
Miscellaneous	16
Bakehouses	7
Refuse and Disposal Tip	21
Rodents	3
Tents and Vans	1
Schools	7
Disinfestation and Disinfection	1
Animals	7
Food and Meat Shops	194
Egg Packing Stations	16
Offensive Trades	7
Informal Notices Remedied	6

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 AND 1948.

1. INSPECTIONS.

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Number of</i>		
		<i>Inspec- tions</i>	<i>Written Notices</i>	<i>Occupiers Prosecuted</i>
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ...	32	70	4	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the local Authorities ...	14	21	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authorities	7	4	—	—
TOTAL ...	53	95	4	—

2. CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND.

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found				Number of cases in which prosecutions were made
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of Cleanliness ...	1	1	—	—	—
Overcrowding	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences :					
(a) Insufficient	1	1	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	2	2	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for the sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	4	4	—	—	—

3. OUTWORK.

<i>Nature of Work</i>	<i>Number of out-workers in August list required by Section 110 (i) (c)</i>
Wearing apparel Making, etc.	nil

SECTION “ D ”

HOUSING

Housing Repairs:

Individual defective houses were inspected and five were rendered fit by informal notice. Five houses were dealt with under the Rent Act.

Housing Management, Maintenance and Repairs:

Normal maintenance repairs have again been minor in character and small in number. All repairs, except electrical and exterior painting, are carried out by the Council's own small maintenance staff. Detailed information as to housing maintenance costs were given in the Annual Report for 1957.

Two private houses were in progress at the beginning of the year, two were completed during the year, and three were in course of erection at the end of the year. The number of private houses built and in progress during the year was again approximately the same as the average for pre-war years but slightly less than in 1956.

SECTION “ E ”

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk:

During 1958 samples of milk have again been taken as follows:

	Samples	Passed	Failed
Undesignated	3	3 (100%)	—
T.T.	44	41 (92½%)	3 (8%)
T.T. Pasteurised	10	8 (80%)	2 (30%)

Of the samples taken from 10 producers, 6 had no failures, and similarly from 7 retailers five had no failures during the year.

Fifty-two inspections of cowsheds, dairies and milk shops were made and informal notices were given as and when necessary. The general standard of cleanliness has been good.

Ice-Cream:

Samples of Ice-Cream for bacteriological examinations were taken during the year with the following results:

Grade I.	Total	Failed
16	16	nil
(100%)	(100%)	

Slaughterhouses:

One slaughterhouse has been in regular use and has been well maintained.

The arrangements made with the Rural District Council for their Meat Inspector to operate in the Borough has continued to function satisfactorily.

Details of the number of animals killed and inspected and the carcasses, parts of organs condemned, are set ont in the table on page 12.

Bakehouses, Meat and Food Shops:

These premises have been well maintained. Minor improvements have been carried out in a number of them. Inspections were made and three informal notices were given.

New Bye-Laws made under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for the proper handling of food for human consumption have been in force since February. 1952.

The number of food premises in the area are as follows:

Grocers	14
Greengrocers	8
Confectioners	4
Bread and Cakes	4
Meat Shops	7
Fish Shops	2
Milk Shops	2
Dairies	3
Hotels and Bars	10
Cafés	8

There is also a very large and modern hatchery and a large and three smaller egg grading and packing stations which have been maintained in very good order.

Other Foodstuffs:

Foods have been examined and 43 condemnation certificates have been issued. These were mainly canned foods which had deteriorated owing to defective containers. The total weight of food condemned was 4½ cwts. Condemned food is destroyed at the Council's refuse disposal tip.

Food Hygiene Regulations:

In accordance with the Ministry of Food instructions implementation of the Regulations has been maintained by the Medical Officer of Health and the Public Health Inspector as and where considered necessary.

Attention has again been given to markets and outside stalls and vans with further improvement in the storage of and display of edible foods.

Food Poisoning:

No case of food poisoning was notified during the year.

Samples taken under Section 3, Food and Drugs Act, 1938:

Blancmange Powder	}	ALL GENUINE
Halibut Liver Oil		
Cod Liver Oil		
Creamed Rice		
Orangeade		
Brawn		
Dressed Crab		
Rum Butter		
Ice Cream		
Pure Dairy Cream		
Zinc and Castor Oil		
Hamburgers		
Lobster Fish Paste		
Ground Almonds		
MILK—deficient in fat.		Warning letter.
MILK—deficient in fat.		No action.

CARCASSES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED IN WHOLE OR IN PART

	<i>Cattle excluding Cows</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Calves</i>	<i>Lambs and Sheep</i>	<i>Pigs</i>	<i>Horses</i>
Number killed (if known)	344	19	2	1003	641	—
Number Inspected	344	19	2	1003	641	—
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci: Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	28	1	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ..	126	10	—	187	72	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with dis- ease other than tuberculosis and cysticerci ..	36.62%	52.63%	—	21.43%	11.23%	—
Tuberculosis only: Whole carcasses condemned ...	1	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ...	35	3	—	—	18	—
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	10.46%	15.78%	—	—	2.80%	—
Cysticercosis: Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned ..	2	1	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	2	—	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—	—

Total amount of unfit meat and offal condemned: 2 tons, 6 cwts. 54 lbs.

SECTION "F"

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

Cases of infectious diseases notified during the year by the Medical Practitioners and the School Authorities are set out in the tables on pages 14 and 15.

Diphtheria:

No cases of diphtheria were notified during the year.

Poliomyelitis:

No cases of Poliomyelitis were notified during the year.

Tuberculosis:

No deaths were recorded from this cause, but the two new cases were notified during the year, one pulmonary and one non-pulmonary. At the end of the year 31 cases remained on the register as follows:

Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
M.	F.	M.	F.
15	12	2	2

In conclusion I would thank the Mayor and Corporation for the ready hearing my proposals always receive, and the Public Health Staff and others who have assisted in the preparation of this report.

I am, Mr. Mayor. Ladies and Gentlemen.

Your obedient Servant.

E. D. ALLEN-PRICE.

Medical Officer of Health.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED BY MEDICAL
PRACTITIONERS—1958

	<i>Pneumonia</i>		<i>Measles</i>		<i>Scarlet Fever</i>		<i>Whooping Cough</i>	
	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
Under 1 year ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1-2 years ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3-4 years ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5-9 years ...	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—
10-14 years ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15-25 years ...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
25 years and over	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Age unknown	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	1	1	1	2	1	—	—	—

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFIED BY
SCHOOL AUTHORITIES—1958

	<i>Chicken Pox</i>	<i>German Measles</i>	<i>Mumps</i>	<i>Ringworm</i>
OKEHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL ...	1	—	—	—
OKEHAMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL ...	5	1	1	1

